

rights were deemed superior to and independent of the choice of the people, which was merely a vulgar appendage to them. That of itself, with me, is decisive of the whole question. This event was celebrated in the Champ-de-Mai, held on the 1st of June in the open space facing the Military School, where the electors of the departments, the representatives of the people, and the deputations from the army, met in an immense concourse. The Imperial and National Guard and the troops of the line were drawn up in squares in the Champ-de-Mars. Napoleon appeared in the midst of them like a new Charlemagne, surrounded by his brothers, his Court, and the members of his Government, on a magnificent throne. An altar was raised in the centre, and the ceremony begun by invoking the God of battles. After the religious solemnity a deputation of electors advanced to the foot of the throne, and pronounced an eloquent and patriotic address.¹ The result and number of the votes were, then proclaimed, and Napoleon, turning towards the side where the electors were, said aloud, "Emperor, Consul, Soldier, I hold all from the people: in prosperity, in adversity, in the field of battle, in council, on the throne, in exile, France has been the sole object of all my thoughts and actions." Having ended his discourse the Emperor proceeded to the altar with his escort, swearing to observe and maintain the constitutions of the State; the oath was repeated by the ministers and the electoral deputations. The eagles were then distributed among the troops; cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" resounded on all sides, and the crowd (whether of men or women), as they looked on, were filled with admiration and delight, and seemed to think that the enemy could never again pierce through those numerous and dense phalanxes winding slowly along as if incapable of flight!

The great meeting of the Champ-de-Mai was lean favorably described by many writers who were eye-witnesses to it. Napoleon and his brothers, who had again collected around him, were dressed in antique and somewhat fantastic robus; he, as Emperor, was so arrayed as to resemble Charlemagne %

¹ After the celebration of mass, to which, by the by, ever% on*? tltwtt/n« back, the Emperor went down and took his place on an amphitheatre in the middle of the Champ-de-Mars, from whence he was to distribute the eagles to all the cohorts of the departments. This was a beautiful scene, for it was a national one. The Emperor took care to address a word to each of the corps that received these colors, and that word was flattering and calculated to inspire enthusiasm. To the department of the Vosges he said, "You are my old companions." To those of the Rhine, "You have been the first, the most courageous, and the most unfortunate in our disasters." To the department of the Rhone, "I have been bred among you." To others, "Your hands were raised at Kivoli, at Arcole, at Marengo, at Tilsit, at Austerlitz, at the Pyramids." These magic names filled the hearts of those old warriors, the melancholy wreck of so many victories, with a very profound emotion. But, as I have already said, all France was not present at that ceremony, and the enthusiasm of the spectators was not